

 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHARLOTTE	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL #66-24087 JP University of North Carolina at Charlotte Purchasing Office Reese Building, 3 rd Floor 9201 University City Boulevard Charlotte, North Carolina 28223-0001
Addendum Issue Date: Friday, May 3, 2024	Due Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET
Purchasing Agent: James Parker	Digital Marketing Services
ADDENDUM #1	

This addendum is issued to answer questions posed by potential vendors.

Q: Will finalists be selected and asked to make oral presentations before a final determination is made?

A: Finalists will indeed be invited to participate in Zoom or Google Meet discussions prior to our final selection of the chosen agency.

Q: What was your media and marketing budget for the past two years?

A: Over the past two years, our marketing budget has remained fairly consistent at approximately \$760,000 annually. Of this, we allocated \$525,000 towards digital marketing efforts, with \$450,000 specifically directed towards Search Engine Marketing.

Q: Does the \$450K budget also include agency fee? (Or is it separate?) Is media spend included in the overall \$450,000 budget?

A: The \$450,000 budget includes the agency fee. The media spend is included in the overall \$450,000 budget.

Q: Could you provide specifics regarding the allocation of the \$450,000 budget between digital media buying and creative digital services?

A: We are not separating buying and creative from the \$450,000 budget. The main scope of the RFP involves Search Engine Marketing and incorporating PPC, ad auctions, keywords, ad copy, and campaign management.

Q: What percentage of your current student population is transfer-in?

A: The predominant segment of our current student population in our online degree completion programs comprises of transfer-in students, as we currently provide only the final two years of a Bachelor's degree online. However, please note that this structure may evolve in the future. Additionally, we offer a range of graduate degree programs and continuing education offerings, including career development and youth programs, which are typically non-credit, short-form courses.

Q: Will the agency be responsible for developing search ad copy as part of the scope of work outlined in this RFP?

A: Yes, we will expect the agency to provide proposed search ad copy and identify keywords. In some cases, ad copy will also be provided by the marketing team for the School of Professional Studies.

Q: What KPIs and reporting/tracking software are you currently using to track marketing performance? Are you tracking anything lower in the funnel beyond site traffic? Do you use dedicated landing pages for paid media for various programs?

A: We currently employ Google Analytics and Salesforce as our primary tools for tracking marketing performance. Our tracking extends beyond site traffic to include lower-funnel metrics such as the number of requests for information (RFIs), which we monitor through UTM parameters in Salesforce. Additionally, we track the number of applications and enrollments using various Student Information Systems. For our paid media campaigns, we have occasionally utilized dedicated landing pages, exemplified by those used for various programs, such as our degree completion program landing page located at <https://professional.charlotte.edu/landing/degree-completion>).

Q: Are you currently using SEO tracking software/platforms? If so, which one(s)?

A: We currently don't have any paid SEO tracking software or platforms. We are starting to use the free version of the Yoast SEO plugin to help. We also use ChatGPT for keyword research for our SEO efforts.

Q: What systems are you using that the agency would be available to integrate with? What CRM are you currently using?

A: The finalist will be able to have access to our Google Analytics properties. We use Salesforce as our CRM, but the finalist will not have direct access to Salesforce.

Q: Will there be any in-person meetings expected?

A: There are no in-person meetings expected. We anticipate that the vast majority of our meetings will be conducted remotely via Zoom or Google Meet.

Q: Will you accept additional supporting attachments to the proposal contents defined in 2.8, e.g. a case studies pdf?

A: Yes, we will accept those.

Q: Can you confirm if respondents should provide costed media plans as part of their response, or if written campaign rationale and strategy within our response alone is all that is required?

A: Respondents are encouraged to include a written campaign rationale and strategy within their response. Additionally, we are particularly interested in understanding the breakdown of the agency fee and how it fits within the allocated budget of \$450,000, specifically in terms of fees and other related overhead expenses.

Q: Is there a preference for a local/in-state provider or will you consider proposals from out of state agencies who commit to onsite visits?

A: We do not prefer local, in-state, or out-of-state providers; all proposals will be considered no matter where you are located. Onsite visits are not required, as we prefer the agency to allocate a larger portion of the budget towards advertising rather than administrative overhead. However, we do anticipate frequent communication via Zoom or Google Meet.

Q: Please can you confirm the weighting of your preference for agencies who utilize HUB subcontractors/vendors?

A: The weighting for agencies who utilize HUB subcontractors and vendors is outlined in the RFP.

Q: Will the successful bidder be working with any of your existing third parties/agencies?

A: The selected vendor will be collaborating exclusively with the Marketing and Communications Team at the UNC Charlotte School of Professional Studies and will not be required to work with any other third-party agencies.

Q: Is there a specific program from the School of Professional Studies that the advertising should focus on? Alternatively, can you advise what your hero courses are?

A: Our advertising efforts will primarily target the degree completion Bachelor's programs offered online and our continuing education certificate programs. Additionally, Graduate Programs will receive secondary focus. Our standout courses, which we consider our 'hero' courses, include the Medical Coding Certificate, Paralegal Certificate, Human Resources Certificate, the Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies, and the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Q: Who would you consider to be your top 5 competitors?

A: This will be discussed with the awarded vendor.

Q: Is there a response page limit or word count that we should take note of?

A: No limit that we know of.

Q: What top qualities are you looking for in an agency partner?

A: We expect our agency partner to have these qualities:

- Experience and expertise
- Strategic thinking

- Results-oriented
- Communication and transparency
- Cultural Fit
- Budget Alignment with transparency in billing

Q: What are your priority DMAs (ranked if possible)? Are there any specific geographies you've identified as opportunities?

A: Our specific opportunities are:

- Charlotte
- Greensboro-High Point-Winston-Salem
- Raleigh-Durham
- Wilmington
- We have identified Atlanta as an opportunity for some of our programs.

Q: Why have you decided to tender for this opportunity now? Can you confirm what the trigger was e.g. new budget/marketing initiative or a contract coming to an end with the incumbent agency/agencies?

A: The current billing period with our SEM partner ends on June 30, 2024. This RFP process is part of an effort to ensure we have the best agency possible for our needs and develop a formal contract.

Q: Do you have any priority audiences you would like to target e.g. particular age or demographic?

A: Our primary focus is ages 25-54 but we will occasionally have outliers – for example, promotion of our youth programs.

Q: Creative services - under this contract can you confirm the extent of the creative services? Will this also include asset design or just messaging support as per 5.3 in the RFP?

A: The primary focus of this RFP is Search Engine Marketing and the services that are needed to support this effort. If additional add-on services are available, we encourage you to list these in your response, as they may be utilized in the future as our needs evolve.

Q: In The majority of this RFP focuses on SEM and some social advertising. Do you have a breakdown on the % of budget you currently anticipate allocating to each tactic?

A: For the purpose of this RFP, we will be allocating 100% of the budget to SEM. We may be open to considering expanding the vendor's role to include paid social media and other display advertising at a later date.

Q: Are you open to strategic recommendations for other tactics not mentioned in this RFP? For example, other digital advertising, sponsored content?

A: We will listen to other strategic recommendations, but the main focus of the RFP involves Search Engine Marketing and incorporating PPC, ad auctions, keywords, ad copy, and campaign management.

Q: Can you clarify expectations on email marketing strategies? Specifically, whether it involves strategy and design for your own mailing lists, purchasing new lists, or a combination?

A: We operate email marketing in-house. The main scope of the RFP involves Search Engine Marketing and incorporating PPC, ad auctions, keywords, ad copy, and campaign management.

Q: the Online Academic Credit programs, are those online programs for current students (enrolled) or prospective students? Can you outline the difference in these programs? Are there specific degree programs or certificates you want to promote the most to highlight specifically?

A: Online Academic Credit programs are for prospective students and those UNC Charlotte students who were formerly enrolled students who have the potential to re-enter. Our standout courses, which we consider our 'hero' courses to highlight specifically, include the Medical Coding Certificate, Paralegal Certificate, Human Resources Certificate, the Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies, and the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Q: For clarification with the goals of this partnership, are there any other goals that you have for this campaign other than a 10% increase in traffic to your website, such as number of applications completed or increase in students accepted in focused programs? Are there specific metrics, beyond the incremental lift in website traffic that you're looking for in our reporting? How will you provide insight into metrics around application numbers?

A: At the time of writing, we are still waiting on enrollment and application goals for FY25. We feel that a 10% increase in traffic is sufficient for our upcoming enrollment goals, but adjustments may be necessary as we get closer to start.

Q: Do you have historical data from previous years that you'd be able to share with us for reporting for this campaign in 2024-25?

A: We will provide the selected agency with historical data.

Q: Can you share current marketing tactics SPS is running to reach potential students and drive enrollments?

A: Our current marketing tactics to attract potential students and enhance enrollments include Search Engine Marketing (SEM), both paid and organic social media campaigns, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), email marketing, and blog posts/articles. Additionally, we utilize a specialized database to target households likely to pursue further education, whether to earn a degree or obtain a certification.

Q: Do you have Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager on your site, and will you be able to share access with your partner once selected?

A: Yes, have Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager on our site and will be able to share that with the selected vendor.

Q: Can we place a pixel on your website for advertising tracking purposes?

A: Yes, hopefully through Google Tag Manager, but we can work with our IT department should the finalist need something else.

Q: Are you open to strategic consulting as part of this RFP as well? For example, around your website user experience and UI/UX tied to your performance or conversion goals.

A: Strategic consulting is beyond the scope of this RFP. We will be happy to listen to recommendations, but SEM is the focus of this RFP.

Q: Would you be interested in advertising to the WRAL audience in addition to the requested advertising tactics in this RFP?

A: The main scope of the RFP involves Search Engine Marketing and incorporating PPC, ad auctions, keywords, ad copy, and campaign management.

Q: Will your team provide creative assets for this campaign, or will you need your partner to create?

A: We expect the agency to provide support with developing search ad copy and researching keywords.

Q: Will you have video ad components to utilize for this campaign? Are these existing, or something you'd like to see scoped out in response to this RFP?

A: The main scope of the RFP involves Search Engine Marketing and incorporating PPC, ad auctions, keywords, ad copy, and campaign management.

Q: Are you willing to use previously negotiated legal terms?

A: Please include any suggested terms with your response.

Q: Are you willing to negotiate a limitation on the vendor's liability under the contract?

A: Please include these suggested terms with your response.

Q: Is the University planning to pay for services with federal funds?

A: No federal funds will be used.

Q: Is the University willing to negotiate a mutually agreeable payment schedule?

A: Yes, we are willing to negotiate a mutually agreeable payment schedule.

Q: Can you share an enrollment funnel with us for all these programs?

A: We currently have over 60 programs that we are marketing which is a lot of data for an RFP. If you are selected, we will gladly share this information. We have exceeded our enrollment goals in years past.

Q: Can you share enrollment goals per program? Are any programs more of a priority due to revenue or strategic goals?

A: We will gladly share this information to the selected agency. Our standout courses, which we consider our 'hero' courses to highlight specifically, include the Medical Coding Certificate, Paralegal Certificate, Human Resources Certificate, the Bachelor of Science in Professional Studies, and the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Q: Do you expect your media partners to put ads into the market based on program, clusters, or brand advertising?

A: Yes, we expect our media partners to put ads into the market based on program, clusters, or brand advertising.

Q: Can you list all the programs under each umbrella?

A: Please visit our website at <https://professional.charlotte.edu/programs> for a list of programs by category.

Q: What has been your paid digital strategy in the past?

A: In the past, UNC Charlotte has implemented a comprehensive paid digital strategy that includes Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, display ads, social media campaigns, video marketing, retargeting efforts, and email marketing. These methods have been used both to promote specific programs and to enhance the overall visibility of the School of Professional Studies brand. The scope of this RFP concerns SEM and PPC.

Q: What have the previous CPLs been by program?

A: We have consistently averaged around \$54 as a CPL. This varies from month-to-month depending on the program, campaign, and target audience.

Q: What is the process for responding to leads? Does UNC-C have the internal capability to meet the speedy response needs of today's students?

A: We have an amazing team of enrollment specialists who are tasked with responding to leads. They call, text and email our leads at specified intervals. UNC Charlotte School of Professional Studies absolutely has the internal capabilities to meet the speedy response needs of today's prospective students.

Q: If enrollments for these programs were due to digital media buys, how much is/was the spending on ad placements per program per month or annually?

A: We are typically spending around \$32,000 per month on digital media buys for SEM alone.

Q: How many enrollments or leads do you wish to increase in each program within the first contracted year?

A: We hope to incrementally increase the number of enrollments and leads for the first contracted year. The 10% increase in web traffic that we need for FY25 should help us achieve our goals. However, we have much more ambitious enrollment goals for future years.

Q: Is the incumbent digital media buying agency eligible to bid for this contract? How many years has the agency had the AOR?

A: Yes, the incumbent agency is eligible for bidding. The agency has been with UNC Charlotte School of Professional Studies since 2017.

Q: Who is your current agency?

A: Our current SEM agency is Spectrum Reach.

Q: Which CRM platform is currently in use at UNC Charlotte?

A: Our current CRM platform is Salesforce.

Q: How is the digital media buying budget distributed throughout the academic year: a. Fall b. Winter c. Spring d. Summer

A: We have a non-traditional setup for digital media buying. We typically start and run campaigns throughout the academic year depending on what we need. We have been spending around \$32,000 a month on search engine marketing.

Q: What are the primary objectives for your digital media campaigns for Online Academic Credit programs and Continuing Education programs

A: We wish to increase web traffic YOY by 10%. We hope that the increase in web traffic to our targeted audience will lead to an increase in form submissions and ultimately more enrollments.

Q: What methodologies do you employ to evaluate the effectiveness of digital campaigns (e.g., for websites, mobile, and other digital formats)?

A: The metrics we use to evaluate digital campaign performance include website visits, time on site, bounce rates, and conversions in the form of information requests and ultimately enrollments.

Q: Please detail the specific digital creative needs for this contract.

A: We will expect the agency to provide effective ad copy and identify keywords for PPC advertising in addition to campaign management.

Q: Beyond URL tracking, which tools and analytics does UNC Charlotte utilize to assess digital media buying effectiveness?

A: We use a combination of Google Analytics and Salesforce to assess media buying effectiveness. We are looking to increase web traffic and increase form submissions because of the ads.

Q: What metrics, such as Cost Per Engagement and Conversion Rates, does UNC Charlotte use to evaluate digital campaign performance?

A: The metrics we use to evaluate digital campaign performance include website visits, time on site, bounce rates, and conversions in the form of information requests. The ultimate metric is enrollment.

Q: How does UNC Charlotte assess the reach and impact of its digital media campaigns?

A: We assess the reach and impact of our digital media campaigns through analytics (Google Analytics) and metrics such as website visits, time on site, bounce rate, and conversions (mainly information requests and ultimately enrollments). We also do conversion tracking to measure how effectively ad traffic leads to our desired actions through information requests submitted by the prospective student.

Q: With the digital landscape evolving, such as the phasing out of third-party cookies and stringent data privacy regulations, how is UNC Charlotte adapting?

A: We hope to adopt first-party data strategies and enhance consent mechanisms on our websites. This is forthcoming.

Q: Has UNC Charlotte established benchmarks for digital engagement, click-through rates, and online visibility?

A: Yes. We use both internal and external benchmarks for KPIs regarding digital engagement.

Q: Does UNC Charlotte use databases or technologies for targeted digital media campaigns?

A: We have partnered with another vendor to obtain a database of targeted households in the Charlotte DMA. We have already used this database to create paid social media campaigns with some success.

Q: On which metrics does UNC Charlotte base the effectiveness of its digital campaigns?

A: We assess the effectiveness of its digital campaigns based on several key metrics, including but not limited to, click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, the number of requests for information received, overall return on investment (ROI). We also analyze website traffic patterns and user behavior analytics to understand the impact of our campaigns and to continually refine our strategies for maximum effectiveness.

Q: Concerning the HUB participation on page 13, mentioned 10% to minority owned business, are there other MBE/DBE commitments for UNC Charlotte?

A: None that we are aware of.

Q: You ask for “proof of measurable success in media buys in the higher education field within the past few years.” Are you open to examples of higher education experience more than 2 years ago and/or of non-higher ed experience within 2 years?

A: That is acceptable. We want to make sure the agency has experience with higher education.

Q: Under 5.2 Objectives, you mention SEO, social, and email marketing strategies. Are these services your team is running in-house or are they services you expect from this partner?

A: Our team currently manages SEO, social media, and email marketing in-house. It is important to note that the scope of this RFP is specifically focused on Search Engine Marketing (SEM). We are seeking a partner with expertise in SEM to complement our existing in-house capabilities.

A SIGNED COPY OF THIS ADDENDUM MUST BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR BID

COMPANY NAME	DATE
PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE